

TEACHING YOUR BABY TO USE A CUP

Use a small plastic cup.

Hold the cup yourself and let your baby sip from it.

Drink from your own cup along with your baby to show baby how.

When your baby is ready to try the cup alone, use a small unbreakable cup.

Only fill the cup with a small amount (1-2 ounces) of breastmilk or formula.

Tell your baby what a good job he or she is doing.

Expect a lot of spills. Keep a towel or dish cloth handy.

When To Start The Cup

At about **6 months**, offer sips of breastmilk or formula in a cup. You will probably need to help your baby with the cup at this age.

Around **9 months**, your baby will be able to drink well from the cup. Start to wean your baby from the bottle slowly.

Around **12 months**, a baby who has been slowly weaned from the bottle is usually ready to give up the bottle and drink from the cup.

Special Weaning Tips:

- **Breastfeeding mothers:** When you and your baby decide to wean, do it gradually. If your baby is over 9 months old, you can begin to wean to a cup. If your baby is less than 9 months, you may have to wean to a bottle and then to a cup.
- **Weaning will be easier if you have never gotten in the habit of putting your baby in bed with the bottle.** Hold your baby during feeding and then put your baby to bed. As your baby gets older, use a cup and then put your baby to bed.
- **Try to get your baby off the bottle completely by around 12 months of age.** If you wait much longer, baby does not want to give it up.
- **Wean Your Baby Slowly.** Help your baby to give up one bottle or breast feeding at a time. Begin with the feeding that your baby is least interested in. Instead of the bottle or breast, give a cup of formula or breastmilk at that feeding every day. Do this until your baby gets used to it. This could take about a week. Then pick another feeding to use the cup.

Why Wean From The Bottle Around One Year of Age?

- Because your baby is ready for weaning. If you wait, baby may not give up the bottle easily at 15 or 18 months.
- Because your baby can get **tooth decay** if he or she spends too much time on the bottle.
- Because the bottle can decrease your baby's appetite for foods that are needed for growing and a healthy iron level in the blood.

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